3. For empowering Directorate General of Hydrocarbons as an autonomous body with a separate cadre of experts and access to funds.

4. For overseas ventures, to set up a parallel new entity by Oil India Limited. Intense competition in overseas bidding is to be avoided by fixing up a limit related to the production capacity of more than 2 million tones of oil equivalent for ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), below which the other new entity would be permitted to bid.

5. Another recommendation of the Committee relates to setting up of a National Shareholding Trust, modeled after Temasek of Singapore and Khazanah of Malaysia, but with a modification. The oil PSUs joining the Trust shall continue to retain their PSU character and the Trust shall function as non-profit Trust set up under the Societies Registration Act or under the Companies Act or as a statutory body. The Board of the Trust will comprise eminent personalities from Government, Public Sector and Private Sector. The Committee expects that the greater autonomy to the Trust would ensure synergy in operations.

The recommendations are under consideration of the Government.

Commissioning of refinery at Bhatinda

1681. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the status report of the commissioning of Guru Gobind Singh Refineries Ltd. at Bhatinda; and

(b) by when, it is likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Based on the incentives offered by the State Government of Punjab (GoP), as also other commercial considerations, Hindustan Petroleum Corporaton Limited (HPCL) have decided to set up a refinery at Bhatinda. The Deed of Assurance (DoA) is scheduled to be signed at Bhatinda on 12.8.2005 in the presence of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

(b) Configuration of the refinery is being finalized. After the DoA is signed, financial appraisal and tie-up of funds for the project will be carried out. The refinery is likely to be commissioned in 60 months' time from the tie-up of funds for the project.

Experiment on bio-diesel

†1682. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI JANARDAN DWIVEDI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Central Salts and Marine Chemical Institute has recently carried out an experiment of running 'C' class Mercedes Car making use of a bio-diesel obtained from Ratanjot;

(b) whether it is a fact that Mercedes Car was run successfully upto six thousand Kms. on Indian roads by using the said bio-diesel; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to promote the use of bio-fuel in vehicles?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Central Salts and Marine Chemical Research Institute (CSMCRI) have stated that M/s. Daimler Chrysler, Germany, who are collaborating with CSMCRI on the bio-diesel project, have undertaken vehicle tests with neat bio-diesel produced by CSMCRI. A Mercedes Benz C 220CDI manual transmission vehicle was used for this purpose without any engine modification except for the replacement of some plastic seals with rubber seal in the fuel system.

During April 2004, a Mercedes Benz C class car with a neat bio-diesel undertook a journey of 6,000 km covering southern, western and northern sites. No problem was encountered in the trip and an average mileage of 13.5 Km/lit. was obtained, which is in line with what is obtained from fossil diesel. Also, no visual or audible change was found in the engine. At present, M/s. Daimler Chrysler India is running the same car for testing bio-diesel produced by CSMCRI in the mountainous terrains of Leh in the Himalayan region from 6th August, 2005.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.